



# **Buffalo Sabres**

## **Daily Press Clips**

*April 11, 2015*

## **Blue Jackets win as Sabres lock up best shot at No. 1 pick**

By Rusty Miller

Associated Press

April 10, 2015

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) — The Buffalo Sabres fans behind the visiting bench at Nationwide Arena stood and cheered when their team fell behind in the third period and again when it lost.

They might have been just supporting their favorite team through the hard times. More likely, they were celebrating the Sabres locking up the best chance at getting either the prized Connor McDavid or Hobey Baker winner Jack Eichel.

Cam Atkinson scored on a rebound midway through the third period and Sergei Bobrovsky made 23 saves to lead the Columbus Blue Jackets to a 4-2 victory over Buffalo, assuring the Sabres of the worst record in the NHL and the best odds of drafting No. 1.

"It's no position we would ever want to be in," said Buffalo goalie Anders Lindback, who had 36 saves as the Sabres fell to 23-50-8 on the season.

Brian Gionta, who had a goal assisted on Mikhail Grigorenko's tally in the defeat, wasn't rejoicing in another defeat.

"It's frustrating, no doubt about it," he said. "Where we sit is not where we want to be. There's a lot of corrections that need to be made. But you can't dwell on it."

Coach Ted Nolan said he was pleased with the effort — by most of the Sabres.

"I'm certainly proud of these guys. They work and they battle and they don't give up," Nolan said. "Unfortunately, we have a couple that are not doing it and those ones are costing us."

There were a lot of smiles in the other dressing room.

The Blue Jackets, who also got goals from Nick Foligno and Matt Calvert and an empty-netter from Boone Jenner, tied franchise records with their sixth consecutive home win and 12th game in a row earning at least a point (11-0-1). Todd Richards also became the Blue Jackets' leader in coaching victories with 126, one more than Ken Hitchcock.

"It's been a tough year for us, and I'm sure it's been tough for them watching," Atkinson said about Columbus' fans, who saw the Blue Jackets' season slip away because of a long list of injuries to key players. "We're a healthy group right now and we're showing we're a pretty good team."

With the score tied at 2, the Blue Jackets got the big goal.

Shortly after they killed off a third consecutive Sabres power play, Lindback got most of Dalton Prout's hard shot from the right point. But the rebound came out to the right circle where Atkinson rocketed it into the net.

It was Atkinson's 21st goal of the season — and seventh game-winning goal.

The teams traded goals up to that point.

Foligno extended his career high with his 31st goal just 14 seconds in — the fastest goal to start a game all season for the Blue Jackets.

He said he was proud that the club didn't fold after being all but eliminated from the playoffs two months ago.

"It's a credit to the guys in this group," he said. "It shows a lot of character and it bodes well going into next season."

The Sabres responded at the 2:25 mark with Grigorenko collecting his third. Columbus retook the lead at the 9:35 mark with Calvert converting with a hard slap shot from the left circle off a cross-ice pass from David Savard.

Gionta tied it with a minute left in the second before Atkinson's goal put the Blue Jackets ahead and Jenner's empty-netter clinched it.

Richards said being the club's leader in coaching wins was lost in preparation for the season-ending game at the New York Islanders on Saturday night.

"It doesn't mean anything," he said of passing Hitchcock. He preferred to talk about his team's late turnaround.

"There's a good feel right now around the team, the whole organization," he said.

Notes: Buffalo recalled D Chad Ruhwedel from AHL Rochester on Friday. ... The Blue Jackets now have a franchise-record 505 man-games lost to injury. They totaled 292 a year ago. ... The Sabres had won their last two games in Columbus. ... The Blue Jackets last won six home games in a row from Dec. 26, 2007 to Jan. 15, 2008. They put together a 12-game points streak (8-0-4) two years ago. ... Richards is 126-105-21 with the Blue Jackets. Hitchcock, now the coach of the St. Louis Blues, was 125-123-36. ... Jack Johnson and Savard each had two assists for Columbus. Calvert also assisted on Jenner's tally.

## **Penguins-Sabres preview**

By Brett Huston

Associated Press

April 10, 2015

It sounds like a pretty simple task: Beat the NHL-worst Buffalo Sabres and the Pittsburgh Penguins will wind up in the Stanley Cup playoffs for a ninth straight season.

For the last month, though, the Penguins have been even worse than the team most likely to wind up with the No. 1 pick.

Pittsburgh might not necessarily have to beat Buffalo to get to the postseason, but it can remove any doubt Saturday night by picking up two points in a game Sabres fans suddenly wouldn't mind seeing their team play spoiler.

The Penguins (42-27-12) had 88 points through March 12, putting them 14 clear of the postseason cutline and within three of the Eastern Conference's top seed. They've gone 3-9-2 since, failing for a second straight game to lock up a playoff spot with Friday's 3-1 loss to the New York Islanders.

"That's why we play 82 games to see who (are) the best teams after that," forward Patric Hornqvist said. "(Saturday) is a hell of a game and everybody is excited. Live or die. Can't wait."

The Penguins may not have to win to get in. One point will be good enough if Ottawa loses in regulation to Philadelphia earlier Saturday, and they won't need any if Boston fails to beat Tampa Bay.

Already without Kris Letang and Christian Ehrhoff, the Penguins played Friday without Derrick Pouliot (upper body) - the third time in six games they've dressed just five defensemen.

But the problems over the past month extend beyond the blue line. In the past 14 games, Pittsburgh's minus-21 goal differential is tied for the worst in the NHL with Toronto, and its 1.64 goals per game are easily last despite it averaging 34.6 shots - the most in the East.

That's despite having had a league-best 59 more minutes on the power play than its opponents in that span. But the Penguins are just 6 for 42 (14.3 percent) with the man advantage and have given up three short-handed goals - one in each of their last two games.

"Getting frustrated or trying to change the plan, that kind of thing, it's not going to help anything," said Sidney Crosby, who heads into Saturday tied with John Tavares for the NHL points lead at 84 as he tries to win his third Art Ross Trophy. "We believe in the way we play."

Pittsburgh hasn't faced Buffalo (23-50-8) since early November, when it beat the Sabres by a combined 11-1 on consecutive Saturdays. Crosby had a combined eight assists in those, extending his point streak against Buffalo to 19 (10 goals, 26 assists).

Crosby has had a hand in 26 goals during a personal 11-game winning streak in this series. The Sabres have scored 17 goals combined in those contests.

Buffalo has had its hands full with the No. 1 pick from 10 years ago, but Sabres fans have been preoccupied for much of this woeful season with visions of landing the top pick - where they'd presumably take OHL sensation Connor McDavid - in this June's draft.

That's why Friday's 4-2 loss at Columbus, which dropped Buffalo to 4-8-2 in its last 14, was significant. The Sabres locked up the worst record in the league, meaning they can't fall any lower than second in the draft lottery. Boston University star and Hobey Baker Award winner Jack Eichel is expected to be the No. 2 pick.

While the fans might be rejoicing, Buffalo's current players aren't.

"It's no position we would ever want to be in," said goalie Anders Lindback, who is 0-2-1 with a 4.71 goals-against average in four career appearances against Pittsburgh.

Marc-Andre Fleury will presumably make just his second back-to-back start of the season for the Penguins after allowing three goals in 21 minutes in the first. He's allowed three goals on 109 shots during a five-game winning streak against Buffalo.

## **Sabres lose to Columbus, 4-2**

By John Vogl

Buffalo News

April 10, 2015

COLUMBUS, Ohio – For more than a year, Buffalo fans have been dreaming of Connor McDavid and Jack Eichel. The thought of watching one of them become a superstar in a Sabres jersey made folks shake with excitement. It made the on-ice suffering bearable because of the chance for a limitless future.

It's no longer just a dream. Either McDavid or Eichel will be a member of the Sabres next season. One will skate out to center ice on opening night as the new face of the franchise.

The team's last-gasp effort to avoid 30th place came to an end Friday night with a 4-2 loss to the Columbus Blue Jackets. Buffalo will head into Saturday's season finale against Pittsburgh assured of drafting first or second in June, a position that will be finalized with next Saturday's draft lottery.

Though the players were disappointed to finish last for the second straight season, the organization achieved the goal it set back in April 2013. It will build through the draft by landing a generational prospect. McDavid set an Erie Otters record by scoring five goals Friday night, while Eichel became just the second freshman to win the Hobey Baker Award as college hockey's top player.

Getting them wasn't easy. It never is with Buffalo's sports teams. But for one of the few times in history, a Western New York franchise accomplished what it set out to do.

By ending the drama during the penultimate game, the Sabres set up what should be a rollicking Fan Appreciation Night in First Niagara Center. The warring sides of the tanking debate can call a truce and come together to cheer for a team that went through eight months of discomfort on and off the ice.

In a season that was all about losing, a win in the finale could be a game-changer. The Penguins will miss the playoffs with a regulation loss and a Boston victory over Tampa Bay.

"You want to go out on a high note," Sabres captain Brian Gionta said. "It's a good matchup for us against Pitt. We obviously have to be on top of our game, and it'd be nice to get a win for our fans."

The victory for the fans really came Friday. Cam Atkinson etched his name in Buffalo lore by breaking a tense 2-2 tie with 9:25 remaining. The Columbus winger put a shot from the right faceoff circle past the glove of goaltender Anders Lindback to draw cheers inside Nationwide Arena and throughout Sabreland.

Columbus ended the suspense with an empty-net goal by Boone Jenner with 9.7 seconds left. McDavid, by the way, wears No. 97.

As expected, the guys in the Sabres' dressing room remained wrapped in the present, disappointedly taking in the loss rather than what it meant for the franchise.

"It's no position you ever want to be in as a player, but it is what it is," Lindback said of 30th place. "We've got a game tomorrow, and I think it's huge for us to finish strong and show people that we'll keep working hard and keep trying to get better."

The season-ending festivities start with a party in the plaza at 4:30 p.m. The team will announce its MVP, Rookie of the Year, Unsung Hero and "7th Man" fan award prior to the game. In-game events include a 50/50 raffle for a 2015 Lexus, and television viewers also will have the opportunity to win prizes. The players will give fans the jerseys off their backs following the contest.

It could have been a contentious exchange if the Sabres completed their quest for 29th. Instead, a feel-good vibe will fill the arena.

"It's been frustrating, there's no doubt about it," Gionta said of the season. "You can't dwell on what's happened in the past, you've got to look forward and try to find answers and not place blame."

The conclusion of the race for 30th was tighter than anticipated considering Columbus entered the night on a 10-0-1 run. Nick Foligno scored 14 seconds in to get the 17,855 fans roaring and put the Sabres in a hole.

Refusing to be outdone, Marcus Foligno joined his brother on the score sheet two minutes later. He started a tic-tac-toe passing play with Gionta and Mikhail Grigorenko, with the Russian center burying his third goal of the year to tie the game.

Columbus recaptured the lead before the end of the first, but it repeatedly missed chances to put the Sabres away. It cost them when Gionta scored a power-play goal with 58.4 seconds left in the second period, tying the game at 2-2. Gionta has six multipoint games in the last nine outings.

"Lindy played a great game again and kept us in the game for a long time," Grigorenko said of Lindback, who made 36 saves.

Atkinson finally beat him, making McDavid or Eichel a future Sabre.

"We found a way to battle back and made a game of it," coach Ted Nolan said. "The only thing we want to do is go out, give our best and see what happens."

## **Sabres notebook: Injury delays Reinhart's Amerks debut**

By John Vogl

Buffalo News

April 10, 2015

COLUMBUS, Ohio – Sam Reinhart's American Hockey League debut is on hold.

The Sabres' top prospect is nursing a lower-body injury and won't play for Rochester until next weekend. Buffalo assigned Reinhart to the Amerks on Thursday after his junior season ended.

"We're real excited to see what he's going to bring to the table," Amerks coach Chadd Cassidy told reporters in Rochester on Friday. "We figured it was best to rest him for a couple days. It's a nagging injury, but he'll be ready for next weekend."

Reinhart, who played nine games for the Sabres to start the season, is eager to test his skills at the professional level again.

"I'm excited to be here, first time in Rochester, and I'm taking every advantage of being here and trying to learn every day," Reinhart said, according to the Rochester Democrat and Chronicle. "Obviously, it's a bigger and stronger league, and you have to do things a little quicker. The big thing is having confidence. It's tough for a young guy to get confidence right away and play their game."

After recording just one assist with Buffalo, the 19-year-old had 25 goals and 74 points in 54 games with Kootenay of the Western Hockey League. He also led Canada to the gold medal in the world junior tournament.

Odds are good his junior career is over. The 6-foot-1, 185-pounder is expected to play for the Sabres next season. His time in Rochester could give him a nice springboard to the next level.

"It gives him a good measurement," Cassidy said. "He got a taste up in Buffalo, so he knows the pace and it's higher there than it is here, so this will be a good segue for him going into the summer, getting some games at this level and then being ready for training camp next year."

"He's a high-end player, a guy the organization is really excited about and somebody who's going to be a centerpiece of the organization for years to come."

If Reinhart heals as expected, he'll play three games for the Amerks. The only home game is Friday against Utica.

"It's been pretty hectic, a lot of travel throughout the year, but I've been able to keep in mind what my goals are and really focus on performing on the ice and working off the ice, preparing for a chance in Rochester and then in Buffalo later," Reinhart told the media in BlueCross Arena. "I feel like I've been able to prove a lot on and off the ice, and that will ultimately make me better off next year and the years to come."

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Just like in 2013, Chad Ruhwedel will be in the Sabres' lineup when they finish the season. That's where the comparisons stop. The 24-year-old defenseman says he's a way different player that he was two years ago.

"I kind of got thrown into the fire quick out of college, and it just took a little time to be a pro," said Ruhwedel, recalled from Rochester to replace injured Andre Benoit. "Now I just try to play good at whatever level you're at. I think it's mostly just confidence. I've played at this level before. It's just the mentality you've got to have."

Ruhwedel skated with Nikita Zadorov for the Sabres' 4-2 loss to the Columbus Blue Jackets. He's excelled during his second full season with the Amerks, sitting fourth on the team in scoring with 10 goals and 34 points in 69 games.

"We've always been told good defense leads to good offense," Ruhwedel said in Nationwide Arena. "My defense has gotten better, but it's just being able to make plays, having the confidence in yourself to make those little plays to the middle. Whenever you can do a little more than just" pass the puck "up the wall every time, it definitely helps with your confidence."

Ruhwedel has one season left on his contract with the Sabres. He sees an opportunity to be a regular part of the blue line.

"I've had good feedback from all the management, so it's just a matter of working hard now," he said.

...

Anders Lindback went to the Sabres' crease for the 15th time in 18 games, and it's possible he'll close the season there when Pittsburgh visits First Niagara Center on Saturday. Matt Hackett, who served as backup in Columbus, has been dealing with a knee injury.

"We'll see how Hackett's feeling," Sabres coach Ted Nolan said. "He got a good workout. He only practiced once, so to put him in that situation against the Penguins who are desperate, sometimes it's unfair. We'll see how he feels. If he feels good, you never know."

## **Blue Jackets defeat Sabres, who will finish 30th**

By Craig Merz

NHL.com

April 10, 2015

**COLUMBUS** -- The Columbus Blue Jackets ended their home schedule in record fashion with a 4-2 win against the Buffalo Sabres at Nationwide Arena on Friday.

The Blue Jackets are 11-0-1 in the past 12 games to tie their longest point streak (Feb. 26 to March 22, 2013) and equaled their record six-game home winning streak (Dec. 26, 2007 to Jan. 15, 2008).

"I can't say enough about the group of guys in here," Columbus forward Nick Foligno said. "It's been a disappointing season, let's not forget that. I'm proud of how we handled adversity. We've been mature about it, professional about it."

Columbus (41-35-5) finished the season 19-20-2 at Nationwide Arena and out of the Stanley Cup Playoffs.

"Home ice has got to be a better place to play, and we've made a conscious effort of that down the stretch," Foligno said.

Todd Richards won his 126th game as Blue Jackets coach (126-105-21) to pass Ken Hitchcock for the most in their history.

"There's a good feel right now," Richards said. "I'm very proud of the team."

The Sabres (23-50-8) will finish 30th in the League standings and pick no lower than second in the 2015 NHL Draft, likely to select Connor McDavid or Jack Eichel, potential franchise-turning players.

Buffalo has a 20 percent chance of getting the first pick through the NHL Draft Lottery on April 18. But that was not on the mind of Sabres right wing Brian Gionta.

"It's been frustrating, there's no doubt about it," he said of the season. "Where we sit is not where we want to be. There's a lot of corrections to be made, but you can't dwell on the past. You have to look forward."

Columbus ends its season Saturday at the New York Islanders.

The Sabres are home Saturday to play the Pittsburgh Penguins in a critical game for the Penguins, who would clinch a berth into the Stanley Cup Playoffs with a win.

"You want to go out on a high note," Gionta said.

The Blue Jackets also are thinking ahead to next season after going 14-1-1 in the past 16 games. A record number of injuries long ago derailed any chance of making the playoffs for a second straight season.

"It's amazing when our whole team is healthy," Columbus right wing Cam Atkinson said. "We're a pretty good team. It's too bad it's at the end of the season that we're doing this. We have a lot to look forward to throughout the summer and into next season."

Atkinson broke a 2-2 tie with 9:25 left in the third period. He scored off a long rebound after a shot from Dalton Prout. Seven of Atkinson's 21 goals have been game-winners.

Boone Jenner scored an empty-net goal for his ninth with 50 seconds remaining to back 23 saves by Sergei Bobrovsky. Nick Foligno and Matt Calvert scored for Columbus, and defensemen David Savard and Jack Johnson each had two assists.

Gionta and Mikhail Grigorenko scored, and Anders Lindback made 36 saves for Buffalo.

"When they turn it up it shows the difference in the skill set," Sabres coach Ted Nolan said. "We've got a group of guys that work extremely hard but lack the experience at this level. You look at the other team and they've got some world-class players."

The Blue Jackets took the lead 14 seconds into the game. Foligno scored his Blue Jackets-leading 31st goal from between the circles with a slap shot after a pass from Brandon Dubinsky. Dubinsky has three goals and seven assists in a seven-game point streak.

Marcus Foligno, Nick's younger brother, helped the Sabres tie it 1-1 at 2:25. He outmuscled Prout behind the net and fed Gionta in front. Gionta put a drop pass onto the stick of Grigorenko for his third goal.

Calvert, with his 13th, made it 2-1 at 9:35 of the first. He has three goals in four games.

The Sabres rallied for a second time to tie the score when Gionta converted Buffalo's second power play with 59 seconds left in the second. He snapped a shot off the rush for his 13th goal and has a goal and an assist in two straight games.

"I'm proud of these guys the way they worked, the way they battled," Nolan said. "They never give up. Unfortunately we have a couple [of players] that aren't doing it, and those are the ones that are costing us."

## **Buffalo Sabres lose game, win last place in league**

By Jen Neale

Yahoo Sports

April 10, 2015

Congratulations, Buffalo Sabres! You're the worst ... team in the league!

Normally this wouldn't be something to celebrate, but as we've been hearing *a////////* season, the upcoming draft is a special one with Jaconnor McEichel (Connor McDavid + Jack Eichel) on the line.

Last place doesn't guarantee the Sabres the top pick, but it gives them a better chance at getting it with 20-percent of magic beans (or whatever they use) in the draft bucket. (I like to assume it's a giant ball pit like those at Chuck E. Cheese and Bill Daly has to dive in, blindfolded, and pick a ball.)

The NHL instituted new draft odds this year. When they were first announced, Sabres GM Tim Murray was not the least bit pleased with their adoption. The odds were spread out to give the other teams in the lottery more of a fighting chance at the top pick.

His mind can be eased a bit now that his team has locked up the first position; however, as the new format goes, the other bottom 8 teams have an increased shot at the pick. As of Friday night, those 8 teams, from worst to not completely terrible, are: Arizona, Edmonton, Toronto, Carolina, New Jersey, Philadelphia, Columbus, and Colorado. (Statistics nerd alert: The difference between spots 9 and 10 is 1.5-percent, which is significant, when the difference between 10 and 11 is 0.5-percent.)

Don't forget, they're no longer hampered by the rule that a team can only move up so many spots. Which makes things even more interesting considering that teams that aren't in a playoff spot: Los Angeles, San Jose, Boston (for now), and even the slim possibility of Pittsburgh joining the party. Granted, they have a small amount of magic beans in the bucket, but it's still a possibility one of them could end up with CoJack.

Just for giggles, I ran the NHL Draft Simulator and look who won...

At least the Sabres would get Eichel in this scenario.

I ran it a second time and Edmonton won. For the love of all things holy, that cannot happen in real life. Don't send another top draft pick into the Pit of Despair.

## **Sabres lose 4-2 at Columbus, clinch 30th place**

WGR 550

April 10, 2015

Columbus, OH -- The Buffalo Sabres have clinched 30th place in this year's NHL standings with their 4-2 loss to the Columbus Blue Jackets on Friday night at Nationwide Arena.

It took Nick Foligno just fourteen seconds to give the home team the 1-0 lead with his 31st goal of the season. The opportunity was created by a turnover in the Buffalo zone. Anders Lindback could only watch as the puck went into the top corner of the net for the goal that was assisted by Brandon Dubinsky and David Savard. It took the blue and gold just over two minutes to answer. Brian Gionta made a perfect drop pass into the slot and Mikhail Grigorenko buried the chance to even the score at 1-1. Gionta and Marcus Foligno were credited with helpers on the goal.

Nearly halfway through the period Matt Calvert notches his thirteenth goal of the season to give the home team the lead for a second time in the game. Savard picks up his second assist of the night, along with Jack Johnson. Lindback was busy in the opening twenty minutes, facing seventeen shots on goal. Buffalo recorded ten shots on Sergei Bobrovsky. The only penalty of the period went to Zach Bogosian for hooking.

Neither team was able to score until late in the second period thanks to a penalty opportunity. Ryan Johansen was called for tripping, and Brian Gionta made the home team pay with his thirteenth goal of the season to tie the score at 2-2. Tyler Ennis made the pass to the captain, and recorded an assist along with Bogosian. Buffalo was outshot 13-7 in the period, but had the only two power plays of the stanza.

Cam Atkinson broke the stalemate with his twenty first goal of the season a little past the midway mark of the third period. It capped off a stretch where the Blue Jackets were called for a kneeing minor, but had the better of the chances while shorthanded. Dalton Prout and Ryan Johansen were credited with assists on the goal. Boone Jenner capped off the scoring with an empty net goal with under ten seconds to go in regulation.

### Scoring Summary

#### First Period

BUF: 2:25 - Mikhail Grigorenko (3) (Brian Gionta, Marcus Foligno)

CBJ: 0:14 - Nick Foligno (31) (Brandon Dubinsky, David Savard). 9:35 - Matt Calvert (13) (David Savard, Jack Johnson)

#### Second Period

BUF: 19:01 - Brian Gionta (13) PPG (Tyler Ennis, Zach Bogosian)

CBJ: none

#### Third Period

BUF: none

CBJ: 10:35 - Cam Atkinson (21) (Dalton Prout, Ryan Johansen). 19:50 - Boone Jenner (9) ENG (Matt Calvert, Jack Johnson)

### Penalty Summary

#### First Period

BUF: 12:58 - Zach Bogosian (2 min., hooking)

CBJ: none

#### Second Period

BUF: none

CBJ: 10:46 - Brandon Dubinsky (2 min., charging). 18:44 - Ryan Johansen (2 min., tripping)3

### Third Period

BUF: none

CBJ: 8:10 - Nick Foligno (2 min., kneeing)

### Shots on Goal

BUF - 25 (10, 7, 8), CBJ - 10 (17, 13, 40)

## **Hamilton: Sabres take early pressure in Columbus**

By Paul Hamilton

WGR 550

April 10, 2015

Columbus, OH (WGR 550) -- The Sabres didn't start well in Columbus as they let Nick Foligno just walk down the slot wide open. The winger beat Anders Lindback far side and in just 14 seconds it was 1-0 Columbus.

Buffalo got some pressure pretty quickly after that and Marcus returned the favor to his brother. Marcus worked the puck in to Brian Gionta. Mikhail Grigorenko made himself available in front and he scored his second goal in two games to tie it.

Columbus then got its act together again and pretty much spent the rest of the period in Buffalo's end.

Matt Calvert had a nice backhand stopped by Lindback, but he then went over to the left circle and got a great pass from David Savard at the right point. Lindback was way back on the goal line and Calvert picked the far corner for his 13<sup>th</sup>.

Columbus had two wide open nets with Tyson Strachan laying out to block one chance. The other had Lindback on the side wall trying to play the puck. He gave it to Brandon Dubinsky who went for the open cage, but missed it.

The Blue Jackets had a power play and spent most of the two minutes in the Sabres zone. Lindback stopped Ryan Johansen and Jeremy Morin very tight in front.

Lindback had made 15 saves while Sergei Bobrovsky had nine.

Columbus picked up right where it left off on the second period.

Boone Jenner stripped the puck from Zach Bogosian and went in all alone. Lindback lunged out as Jenner went to the backhand leaving a wide open net, Jenner hit the post.

Nick Foligno made a move and was allowed to just bring the puck out in front, only to be stopped by Lindback again.

Grigorenko has the goal and made a great play coming back breaking up a rush. He immediately started a good rush the other way with a good pass.

Buffalo had one decent chance when Cody Hodgson was handed the puck looking eye to eye with Bobrovsky. Hodgson went to the backhand and came all the way across with Bobrovsky and never took a shot.

Lindback made some more saves at the other end giving him 13 on the period, but despite being outplayed, the Sabres tied it.

Johansen took a silly tripping penalty and Gionta was allowed to come through the left circle beating Bobrovsky for his 13<sup>th</sup>.

Bobrovsky made just five saves on the period.

Hodgson had the first chance of the third period as he came through the left circle with a wicked shot. Bobrovsky just got an arm on it.

Both teams seemed to be playing carefully in the first 7.5 minutes of third. Ennis had a good chance as he flew through the right circle, but was stopped by Bobrovsky.

Nick Foligno took a kneeling penalty and right after he came out, Cam Atkinson handcuffed Lindback after he stopped a Dalton Prout shot. The puck got through for his 21st.

None of the players in the locker room wanted to finish in 30th place. It was apparent all season and tonight was no different. Head coach Ted Nolan added that "for the vast majority of these guys, they give you everything they have every night."

"Well it's been frustrating, there's no doubt about it" Gionta said. "Where we sit is not where we want to be. So, there's a lot of corrections to be made and you can't dwell on what's happened in the past."

## **Sabres prep for final road game of season**

By Chris Ryndak

Sabres.com

April 10, 2015

**COLUMBUS** – With two games remaining in the regular season, the Buffalo Sabres find themselves up against some pretty tough opponents. It starts Friday night in Columbus for the team's final road game of the year.

The Blue Jackets are on quite the roll as of late. They're 10-0-1 in their past 11 games and are coming off a 5-0 win over Toronto on Wednesday.

They've been hit hard by injuries this season, having lost 502 man games due to injury, but have been able to put together a nice run to close out the season.

"This team, if they didn't run into the injury bug, they'd be playing for the Stanley Cup for sure," Sabres coach Ted Nolan said. "They've got a very talented team. They're starting to get healthy. They're moving around the puck, they feel very good about themselves. As I mentioned to the guys, if we're not ready, it could be a long night."

The Tops Game Night pregame show begins at 6:30 p.m. on MSG-B and Bell with puck drop slated for 7 p.m. from Nationwide Arena. The game can also be heard live on WGR 550.

The Sabres will close out the regular season on Saturday at home against the Pittsburgh Penguins at 7 p.m. for Fan Appreciation Night.

"Everyone here, we're still going right to the final whistle. No one's going to hang their heads early," forward Marcus Foligno said. "With two games to play, they're going to be tough games and you've got to be mentally and physically ready to go for them."

Nolan sees these final two games as important ones for some of the younger players trying to establish themselves in the NHL. He pointed out the team's three young centers – Johan Larsson, Mikhail Grigorenko and Philip Varone – in particular.

"Some of these guys want to make a lasting impression in their last couple games. So if [the team is] going to make some kind of moves, it's not my position they're going to be moving, it's going to be somebody else's," Nolan said.

"Varone, it's going to be a big couple games for him. Larsson, it's going to be a big couple games for him, Grigorenko. Those are the type of guys who want to make a lasting impression so when you're reviewing the roster here, during the offseason, draft, trade deadline, you know what you've got."

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### **STARTING IN GOAL...**

Anders Lindback will start in goal for the Sabres while his counterpart Sergei Bobrovsky goes for his 30th win of the season.

Lindback will likely start on Saturday as well depending on how Matt Hackett is feeling. Hackett hasn't played since March 28 as he recovers from some soreness and swelling in his surgically repaired knee.

It doesn't appear that Chad Johnson, who stayed behind in Buffalo, will be ready to play Saturday. He's been out since March 6 with an ankle injury. He practiced with the team on Thursday for the first time since sustaining the injury.

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## **RUHWEDDEL RECALLED**

With Andre Benoit sidelined due to an upper-body injury, the Sabres called up Chad Ruhwedel from the Rochester Americans of the American Hockey League. The Amerks played in Cleveland on Thursday, so for Ruhwedel, it was a quick trip to Columbus.

He joins the Sabres for his second recall of the season. In two NHL games during his first recall in March, he recorded one assist and a plus-2 rating. Ruhwedel has recorded 34 points (10+24) through 69 AHL games in 2014-15, ranking him fourth among Amerks skaters and tying for 14th among all AHL defensemen.

Now in his second full professional season, he's reached a point where he feels that he's adjusted to the style of the professional game.

"My defense has gotten better, but just being able to make plays, having the confidence in yourself to make those little plays through the middle, et cetera, being creative," he said. "Whenever you can do a little more than just [put the puck] up the wall every time, it definitely helps with your confidence."

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## **PROJECTED LINEUP**

26 Matt Moulson – 22 Johan Larsson – 63 Tyler Ennis  
82 Marcus Foligno – 25 Mikhail Grigorenko – 12 Brian Gionta  
19 Cody Hodgson – 84 Philip Varone – 20 Zac Dalpe  
44 Nicolas Deslauriers – 37 Matt Ellis – 36 Patrick Kaleta

24 Tyson Strachan – 47 Zach Bogosian  
41 Andrej Meszaros – 55 Rasmus Ristolainen  
51 Nikita Zadorov – 5 Chad Ruhwedel

35 Anders Lindback  
31 Matt Hackett

## **Sabres locked into last place with loss to Blue Jackets**

By Chris Ryndak

Sabres.com

April 10, 2015

**COLUMBUS** – It's almost over for the 2014-15 Buffalo Sabres. They wrapped up their final road game of the year on Friday in disappointing fashion.

Columbus Blue Jackets forward Cam Atkinson netted the game-winning goal with 9:25 left in regulation to lift the Blue Jackets over the Sabres by a 4-2 score at Nationwide Arena. Mikhail Grigorenko and captain Brian Gionta were Buffalo's goal scorers. Anders Lindback stopped 36 of 39 shots. Only one game remains on the schedule.

"It's frustrating to get that loss. It was not a clean game by any means by us and we still gave ourselves a chance," Gionta said. "If we cleaned some things off, we would've been much better off."

Sabres coach Ted Nolan was pleased for the most part with the way his team battled, not only through this game, but through a difficult season as a whole.

"You look at the opposition, they're a good team and they've got some class players on that team that when they turn it up, it shows you the difference in the skill set," Nolan said. "That's all. We got a group of guys that work extremely hard but we've got a lot of guys that lack experience at this level."

With a goal and an assist, Gionta has six multi-point games in his past nine. According to Elias Sports Bureau, only Calgary's Jiri Hudler has been that productive over a nine-game stretch this season.

Gionta also has 16 points (6+10) in his past 13 games, giving him a total of 35 points in 68 games this year.

With the loss, the Sabres are guaranteed to finish in last place and have the best odds to win the NHL Draft Lottery. The Sabres can pick no worse than second in the upcoming draft.

"It's been frustrating, there's no doubt about it," Gionta said. "Where we sit is not where we want to be so there are a lot of corrections to be made. But you can't dwell on what's happened in the past. You've got to look forward and try to find answers and not place blame."

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### **SCORING SUMMARY**

Columbus wasted no time in scoring their first goal of the game. Just 14 seconds in, Nick Foligno bounced on a loose puck in the slot to beat Lindback for his 31st goal of the season.

The Sabres were quick to answer. Working behind the net, Marcus Foligno sent the puck out to Gionta. A drop pass from Gionta landed on the stick of Grigorenko, who then roofed a shot over Sergei Bobrovsky 2:25 into the first. Grigorenko now has goals in back-to-back games after scoring on Monday against Carolina.

"We know they've been really good lately and they came flying out," Lindback said. "We bounced back and got a goal back. That was huge and we kept it 2-1 in the first period. We worked ourselves back into the game and unfortunately it didn't go all the way."

The Blue Jackets jumped back into the lead when Matt Calvert put one past Lindback at the 9:35 mark of the first period to go ahead 2-1.

Gionta then tied it with a power-play goal with 58.4 seconds remaining in the second period to make it 2-2.

However, the Blue Jackets were able to take the lead and hang on for the win with Atkinson's goal. Boone Jenner scored on an empty net with 9.7 seconds left in regulation to ice the game.

"Lindy played a great game again kept us in the game for a long time," Grigorenko said. "They had a lot of scoring chances but I thought we created some good opportunities, too. We've just got to eliminate those mistakes that we create ourselves like turnovers and unforced mistakes like that that cost us the game."

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## **ONE TO GO**

With the road portion of the 2014-15 season in the books, the Sabres will close out the year at home on Saturday against the Pittsburgh Penguins for Fan Appreciation Night. Pittsburgh will be fighting for their playoff lives as they lost to the New York Islanders on Friday.

"I don't know about being spoilers. Pittsburgh's a very talented team," Nolan said. "So the only thing we want to go out and do is just go out and give our best and see what happens."

The Tops Game Night pregame show is set to begin at 6:30 p.m. on MSG-B and Bell. Faceoff is scheduled for 7 p.m. The game can also be heard live on WGR 550.

"It's no position you ever want to be in as a player but it is what it is," Lindback said. "We've got a game tomorrow. I think it's huge for us to finish strong and show people that we keep working and keep trying to get better."

## **Penguins play Sabres seeking playoff berth**

By Joe Yerdon

NHL.com

April 10, 2015

**PENGUINS (42-27-12) at SABRES (23-50-8)**

**TV: CITY, ROOT, MSG-B**

**Season series:** The Pittsburgh Penguins have won two games against the Buffalo Sabres, outscoring them 11-1.

**Penguins team scope:** Pittsburgh would clinch a berth in the Stanley Cup Playoffs with a win or an overtime loss. Defenseman Derrick Pouliot did not play in a 3-1 loss to the New York Islanders on Friday and is questionable. Defenseman Christian Ehrhoff is recovering from a concussion and is doubtful, but he wasn't ruled out by Penguins coach Mike Johnston. The Penguins used five defensemen against the Islanders and could be in the same position if Ehrhoff and Pouliot are unavailable. Captain Sidney Crosby has a 19-game point streak against the Sabres (10 goals, 26 assists). He is tied with John Tavares of the Islanders for the NHL scoring lead with 84 points.

**Sabres team scope:** Buffalo will likely be without defenseman Andre Benoit. He left a 4-3 win against the Carolina Hurricanes on Monday with an upper-body injury and did not play Friday in a 4-2 loss to the Columbus Blue Jackets. Chad Ruhwedel replaced Benoit and will likely do so again. Buffalo is assured of finishing 30th in the NHL after the loss Friday and will have one of the top two picks in the 2015 NHL Draft.